

Minutes  
Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee  
March 28, 2005

**Members Present:** Russ Brubaker, Susan Casey, Doug Dunham, Don Harper, Terry Holme, Jeff Hou, Cheryl Klinker, Sharon Lee, Peter Lukevich, Adrian Moroles, Joyce Moty, Jackie Ramels, Keith Rickards

**Staff Present:** Ken Bounds, Catherine Anstett, Bill Blair, Susan Golub, Donald Harris, Cathy Tuttle

**Committee Business:** The March 28 meeting agenda was approved as amended: a discussion of ethics rules for advisory committees was added. The minutes from the February 28 and March 7 meetings (Opportunity Fund Open Houses) were approved.

**Public Comments:** No comments.

**Ethics Discussion:** In the mailed packets for this meeting members received rules from the Ethics and Elections Office for advisory committee members and a memo from Committee Chair Russ Brubaker regarding the rules. Mr. Brubaker reviewed the rules: if a Committee member has private interest involvement with a project as defined on the Ethics handout then the member must disclose this information and not discuss or vote on the project. Those members who have this situation with a specific project are eligible to discuss and vote on other projects and on the complete package, even if it includes the project with which they are involved. The issue is significant involvement, not just a passionate involvement in parks.

Committee member Moroles disclosed that he is involved with Friends of Cesar Chavez Park and will not discuss or vote on that project.

Committee member Klinker disclosed that she is the Chair of the North District Stewardship Group which submitted the application for the 33<sup>rd</sup> Ave. NE park. She will not discuss or vote on that project.

Committee member Harper disclosed that he is the Chair of the Big Howe Improvement Project and its treasurer. He will not discuss or vote on that project.

Jackie Ramels stated she is on the Board of the Associated Recreation Council, but as this organization did not submit a specific application she does not have a conflict.

**Opportunity Fund Staff Recommendations:** Cathy Tuttle presented staff recommendations for development projects. In a power point presentation she discussed each project that staff recommends for funding. In the first round of the Opportunity Fund, the allocations were heavily weighted to property acquisition. In this round, while we still want to acquire property, the recommendations focus on developing property that was acquired in the first round.

In July 2004, the Oversight Committee voted to allocate \$882,000 of the Opportunity Fund to be divided among three underserved Urban Centers that had received acquisition funding without having an identified site during the first round: University District, Denny Triangle and the International District/Pioneer Square. In addition, the Committee voted to allocate \$112, 000 to complete

acquisition of Fremont Peak Park. Tonight, staff is presenting recommendations for the remaining \$3 million in the Opportunity Fund.

The recommendations are based on the criteria included in the Levy Ordinance and the additional criteria adopted by the Committee. These are that the project:

- Be in or serve an urban village or urban revitalization area;
- Addresses areas with an open space deficiency;
- Is consistent with an approved plan;
- Has reasonable operating costs;
- Can leverage other funds;
- Is a unique opportunity that may be lost if we don't act now;
- Is a unique type of project;
- Was acquired during the first round of the Opportunity Fund;
- Has a high level of community support; and
- Needs the Opportunity Fund to be completed.

More than \$12 million worth of requests were received. Those that staff is recommending for funding are:

**Development Projects: Cathy Tuttle**

Maple Leaf Community Garden: Meets an open space deficiency and serves an urban village. It leverages other funds, has extremely high community support and is a site that was purchased during the first round of the Opportunity Fund. Community requested \$250,000 and the staff recommendation is for \$150,000. Staff believes there is room for scope decrease and an increase in community fundraising

Pinehurst Pocket Park: Serves two urban village neighborhoods and meets an open space deficiency. The project leverages other funds and is a site that was purchased during the first round of the Opportunity Fund. The request was for \$284,294 and staff is recommending \$100,000 with the expectation that the community has more capacity to raise funds and also that this is a small passive park and can be developed with less money than requested.

Fremont Peak Park: Serves an urban village, leverages other funds, has extremely high community support and is a site acquired during the first round of the Opportunity Fund. The request was for \$450,000 and staff is recommending \$250,000. The site is very steep so will need more financial support than other projects, but staff feels the scope can be slightly reduced and that more community funds can be raised.

Ballard Pocket Park: Serves an urban village with an open space deficiency and was acquired during the first round of the Opportunity Fund. The request was for \$262,750 and staff is recommending \$150,000 which is enough money to develop the first phase of the project with the expectation that the community has the capacity to raise additional funds.

Mt. Baker Ridge Viewpoint: Serves a neighborhood revitalization area, leverages other funds, has extremely high community support and is a site acquired during the first round of the Opportunity Fund. The request was for \$350,000 and staff is recommending \$250,000. The community would need to raise additional funds to address park elements beyond the view deck, pilings, and standard park furnishings.

Ercolini: Serves an urban village, was acquired during the first round of the Opportunity Fund and has capacity to raise additional funds. The staff recommendation for \$200,000 (the request was for \$460,000) is enough to develop a first phase of this project. Parks has not yet completed purchase of the site but expects to finalize the purchase, which combines Opportunity Fund, King County Conservation Futures Tax funding and State IAC grant money, in the next three months. Community support coalesced during the purchase phase and is expected to be strong for development as there are a lot of children in the neighborhood with no local park.

Junction Plaza: Serves an urban village, leveraged other funds, has community support and is a first round acquisition. Parks is expecting to finalize purchase of the property in the next few months. Purchase was delayed due to requirements for testing groundwater contamination. The \$200,000 recommended by staff will need to be supplemented by additional community fundraising. The requested amount was \$483,206.

Haller Lake: Serves an urban village, has an open space deficiency, has extremely high community support and is a unique opportunity – if Opportunity Funds aren't invested in this site the property probably won't be developed as a park. This is a unique time for this project as the community has come together, including people around the lake, in support of the project. The request was for \$300,000 and staff is recommending \$100,000. The community will need to raise additional funds.

Cesar Chavez Park: Located in the South Park neighborhood, in an urban village, leverages other funds and has extremely high community support. Request was for \$200,000; staff is recommending \$100,000. This will allow some development at a more limited scope to proceed.

Marra Farm: Located in an urban village. This is a unique opportunity at a time when this neighborhood is coming together in support for this park. We recently acquired two properties and there is momentum for development. Staff is recommending \$180,000, with some to be spent for a planning process and some for capital development. The requested amount was \$341,764.

Powell Barnett Park: Serves an urban village, is in a neighborhood revitalization area, leverages other funds and has extremely high community support. Request was for \$275,000 and the award is for \$150,000 which will require some additional community fundraising and/or a reduction in scope.

Brighton Science Park: Serves an urban village and is in a revitalization area, has high community support; request for \$370,000 and the staff recommendation is for \$150,000 which could produce one phase of the project and the high community support could raise additional funds for phase two.

Van Asselt Playground: Located in a revitalization area and adjacent to an urban village. This is a unique opportunity because we can coordinate this project with the community center redevelopment. The \$270,000 request was reduced to \$150,000 and will require additional community funding.

#### **Acquisition Projects: Donald Harris**

There are two acquisition projects in the staff recommendations.

Ernst Park Addition: This is a narrow piece of property adjacent to Ernst Park, a new Pro Parks Levy park. With this property we will have a more significant open space in the neighborhood and will prevent development adjacent to the park. Staff is recommending \$370,000 instead of the requested \$300,000 because of an increase in property prices in this neighborhood.

12 Avenue Village Gathering Space: This is an urban center and revitalization area with a significant deficiency in open space. The area already exceeded 150% of the City's projected growth projections and the open space deficit is growing faster than anyone predicted. No clear site identified but without allocating money we will lose the opportunity to provide open space. Request was for \$1 million; staff is recommending \$550,000. We believe we can match this amount with King County Conservation Futures Tax funding because it will take at least \$1 million to purchase property in this neighborhood. The focus of the community is the 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor.

In response to questions it was noted that the fields at Seattle University are not open to public use.

### **Committee Discussion**

Doug Dunham asked for information about the accessibility of public school grounds. A Seattle School District representative responded that most grounds are open to the public after school hours and on week ends, except some cases where gates are locked for security.

A quick review was given of the reasons that projects were not recommended for funding, many of which are good projects that meet some of the funding criteria. Deciding which projects would get \$3 million from requests for over \$12 million was very difficult.

### **Acquisition Projects not Recommended for Funding: Catherine Anstett**

Wedgwood Pocket Park: Not in an urban village or revitalization area.

Colonnade Mountain Bike Park: A good project as the only part of the park not under I-5 but not as compelling as other projects; surrounded by WSDOT property.

Republican Street P-patch: No willing seller.

International District Community Center: Good project but may be other ways to accomplish.

Terry Pettus Park: No willing sellers and probably very expensive because it is waterfront property.

Kubota Garden Addition: Parks will use Levy Green Space funding to purchase part of the property without the house and have the Kubota Gardens Foundation purchase the area with the house. The Foundation has a building they plan to sell which can provide them money to purchase the house.

Rose Greenbelt: Not in an urban village, revitalization area or underserved area. Also does not meet criteria for Levy green space acquisition as is not in a designated greenspace.

### **Development Projects not Recommended for Funding: Cathy Tuttle**

Many excellent projects were not recommended for funding. Of the over \$12 million in community funding requests from the Opportunity Fund, only \$3 million is available to award. Projects that meet some of the criteria are not invariably recommended for funding.

Lake City: SHA property was an acquisition request initially but SHA has agreed to donate land for the park and use the Opportunity Fund for development funding. The project meets many of the criteria but is not consistent with an approved plan, is not a first round project.

Ballard Future Land Acquisition: This is the only first round Opportunity Fund acquisition project not recommended for development funding. Opportunity Fund funds are recommended for the Ballard Pocket Park which was submitted by the same group. This request is for development of a future acquisition – property that has not been acquired yet.

Greenwood & Eddie McAbee Creekview Trails: Is adjacent to a named Pro Parks project which makes it ineligible for Opportunity Fund money. Also is not in an urban village or an area with an open space deficiency.

Meridian Park/Good Shepherd Center Gateway: No open space deficiency or in an urban village and not a first round acquisition.

Big Howe Improvement Project: No open space deficiency, not a unique opportunity.

North Beach Sports Field Renovation: No open space deficiency and not in an urban village or revitalization area.

Bailey Gatzert Playground Improvement: Meets many criteria, but staff concern about using Opportunity Funds on school property led to the no funding recommendation.

Eco-Renovation of Cascade People's Center: No open space deficiency and concern about increased operating costs.

Amy Yee Tennis Center – Outdoor Courts: No open space deficiency, no approved plan, and concern about increased operating costs.

Beacon Hill Trail and Restoration: No open space deficiency, not consistent with approved plan.

Central Park at Rainier Vista: Concern that the location makes the park inaccessible to the general community. Not consistent with an approved plan and not a unique opportunity.

Mapes Creek Walkway: Received \$100,000 from first round of the Opportunity Fund and has leveraged additional funds which can meet the needs of the project.

Whitworth Elementary Environmental Playground: Does not address open space deficiency, not a unique opportunity, serves school more than the community as a whole.

Camp Long Lodge: Ground Floor Renovation: Meets many criteria. Parks staff is exploring other sources of funding such as the Department's Major Maintenance Cumulative Reserve Fund, although this list already has \$185 million worth of projects on it.

Russ Brubaker expressed a concern that the funding levels for some of the projects which are lower than requested will not enable project development. He is interested in perhaps reducing the number of projects we fund and giving more to those that we do fund.

Jackie Ramels asked if Haller Lake and Cesar Chavez, which applied in the first round, are different projects. It was noted that the projects are the same but that the community support has increased. She also asked whether there was an open space deficiency in South Park, the location of Marra Farm and Cesar Chavez. The reply was that Marra Farm counts towards meeting the open space deficiency.

Donald Harris provided an update on first round acquisition projects in the areas where funds were set aside with no identified site:

- University District: working on several potential alternatives: negotiating to partner with a developer, expanding the existing Christie Park, acquiring south half of University Heights Center and perhaps partnering with Sound Transit;
- Denny Triangle: Talking with Cornish about property; and
- International District/Pioneer Square: focusing on several properties in the International District.

Mr. Harris noted that we have matched every dollar that the Opportunity Fund set aside for these neighborhoods, so that if the Committee chose to reallocate any of these funds we would lose a corresponding dollar that we have raised in a match. The Oversight Committee will be asked to reallocate the funds if necessary before the end of the Levy in 2008.

Regarding the difference between the requested funding amount and the recommended amounts, Peter Lukevich asked how much staff involvement there was in the development of the project budgets and how confident are we that communities can raise additional funds. Cathy Tuttle responded that Parks staff was involved in the development of nearly all of the development project budgets and has identified scope items that could be held back to become a second phase of a project. She looked at

the potential fundraising capacity and the possibility of the community raising funds through alternative sources such as a Starbucks or Neighborhood Matching Fund grant.

Regarding Bailey Gatzert project, Adrian Moroles questioned why this project is not recommended since it meets many of the criteria and whether there is a restriction on funding projects at schools. Staff and committee members responded that there are concerns about accessibility of school projects and Peter Lukevich noted that higher fees are charged for school athletic fields than for Park Dept. fields creating an additional access concern. Superintendent Bounds noted that there is also an operation and maintenance question when Park Dept. funds are spent on school grounds.

Susan Casey questioned the recommendation to fund the addition to Ernst Park, noting that it is a small, expensive piece of land and that Fremont was getting a significant amount from the Levy.

Sharon Lee raised the question of reallocating some of the \$882,000 the Committee voted in July to set aside for development in the University District, Denny Triangle and International District/Pioneer Square. She noted that we have not identified sites in these neighborhoods and that if/when we do the communities could probably raise money to develop the sites. She would rather see the funding go to projects that are real and not hypothetical future parks.

Staff responded that after the Committee's vote in July the University District, Denny Triangle and International District/Pioneer Square neighborhoods were told that they did not need to apply to the Opportunity Fund, and so did not apply. Superintendent Bounds stated that by this time next year we will need to make the decision whether to reallocate these funds. These areas are experiencing rapid growth making it difficult to find property. Parks staff has already leveraged the funds.

Jackie Ramels stated that the Committee voted on criteria that favors development of projects acquired during the first round and that we should be consistent with the criteria.

Terry Holme noted that the funding set aside for the 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue Village is similar and that we don't need another unidentified project and questioned whether the Bailey Gatzert project could serve the same community. He also supported giving more money in this round to development rather than acquisition.

Sharon Lee urged the Committee to support the Bailey Gatzert project and to develop an agreement with the School District regarding access. She also expressed support for the renovation of the Cascade Peoples Center which serves a diverse community in a poor quality building.

Superintendent Bounds directed staff to provide the Committee at the next meeting with information about what could be developed solely with the funding recommended by staff.

Doug Dunham expressed support for moving funds from the 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue Village to Bailey Gatzert with an agreement with the School District regarding access. Staff was asked to have a discussion with the School District about this and report back to the Committee.

Sharon Lee expressed support for the Amy Yee Tennis Center project noting that it serves a lot of people.

Keith Rickards noted that Fremont Peak Park is a neighborhood park without parking; it is not a destination park and the committee should consider decreasing the amount allocated to this project.

Joyce Moty questioned whether a long term lease for the International District Community Center project is feasible. Superintendent Bounds responded that issues with this project include increased operation and maintenance costs and funds for tenant improvements and staffing.

The Committee discussed projects not in the staff recommended list and created a short list of projects they would like to keep under consideration. These include:

- Bailey Gatzert;
- Amy Yee Tennis Center;
- Kubota Garden;
- Colonnade Mountain Bike Park; and
- Cascade Peoples Center.

The Committee decided not to take a preliminary vote on the staff recommendations at this meeting and to have the April 25<sup>th</sup> public hearing be on the staff recommendations. The Committee vote will occur at the May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

The Committee indicated that in the packet that is mailed to them prior to the April 25 meeting they would like to receive copies of letters of support that have been received regarding Opportunity Fund projects.

Minutes approved at the April 25, 2005 meeting of the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee.